

**Christ Presbyterian Church  
Edina, Minnesota  
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James Madsen  
Come and See: Life for All  
John 4**

I'm Pastor James Madsen. Next month marks my seventh year here at CPC. It just flies by, the best seven years of my life. It's a joy to be able to serve here with you and have the opportunity to share with you this morning.

During Advent we have been experiencing a series called "Come and See." Today we come to the final segment called "Life for All," this idea that the Gospel, the good news, is not something we keep to ourselves, but that we share with those around us. When I was given this assignment, I just couldn't shake the thought that you have to have this abundant life in your heart in order to give it to others. Does what flows out of your heart give life to others? There seems to be this phenomenon in our culture today that the busyness of December leaves one in a post-Christmas coma. Christmas Day feels like a blur, doesn't it? We race through December anticipating Christmas Day and then it is gone in a moment. Sometimes it seems that all these things we do that are supposed to give us life can in the end leave us exhausted, a bit numb and missing the point of Christmas. If Christmas doesn't remind us how desperately we needed Jesus to come and rescue us from our sins, we have missed the point of Christmas!

Or, maybe you can feel the joy of Christ in your heart now because of Christmas, but the rest of the year just feels dry and empty. One of my favorite speakers, Elyse Fitzpatrick, suggests that we have a tendency to enjoy Jesus at Christmas, then put Him away with the rest of our Christmas decorations, and we don't bring Him back out again until Easter. Does it strike anyone else as strange that we go from the Christmas season—in which we acknowledge that we desperately need a Savior, that no amount of human effort would ever be enough to make us righteous before a Holy God, that we desperately need Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection to close the gap for us—and then we move from Christmas directly into the season of New Year's resolutions, the epitome of self-effort and self-improvement?

So quickly the good news of Christmas can leak out of our hearts and for so many reasons: stress at work, broken relationships, unmet expectations, or habits you know you should stop, but you just can't. Or maybe your heart was feeling empty before Christmas. Maybe your marriage feels strained and you feel like your spouse isn't meeting your needs and you are not really sure what to do about it, but you're afraid of the future. You are starting to feel more like housemates than honeymooners. Or, the demands of your kids are sucking you dry. You love them. You want the best for them, but for goodness sake, they are a lot of work, aren't they? Feeding them, doing their laundry, driving them here and there and back again. It can seem non-stop. Who is going to take care of me? It feels impossible to think about giving Jesus to others when our hearts feel empty and depleted. The idea just becomes one more burden on

our endless to-do list. How do we give the abundant life to others when we feel like we are just barely hanging on?

As I was pondering this, I thought of the woman at the well in John, chapter 4. Maybe it seems like a leap for us to go from the Christmas story right into the beginning of Jesus' ministry, but I wanted us to see that Jesus did not just come to give us eternal life. He also came to give us the abundant life on a daily basis. Here we are early in Jesus' ministry. In the previous chapter, John, chapter 3, Jesus proclaimed to the religious leader Nicodemus that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For the casual observer, Nicodemus seems exactly like the kind of person God would send His Son for: religious, God-fearing, a rule keeper. Yet one of the things we find out is that rule keepers are the most resistant to accepting Jesus and His offer of grace.

Then in chapter 4, we learn that the broken, those with empty hearts, are more receptive to Jesus and His grace. The person we encounter here in chapter 4, we learn, is a social outcast in her town because of her history of relationships with men. The disciples were stunned that Jesus would even talk to this woman (as was the woman herself) for Jews did not talk to Samaritans or even to women who were strangers. Let's pick up the story here. Jesus is traveling through Samaria.

**5** So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. **7** When a Samaritan woman came to draw water. . .

Who draws water at noon, the hottest time of the day? Only a woman who has been shunned by all the other women in town, and who knows that the only time it's safe to come out of her house is when no other women are going to be out. It's the only time she would be safe from their scorn and judgment.

. . . Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" **8** (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) **9** The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) **10** Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." **11** "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" **13** Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, **14** but those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." **15** The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." **16** He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." **17** "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. **18** The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." **19** "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.

**25** The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." **26** Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

You can imagine that a woman who has gone through five husbands, whatever the circumstances, must be a person who has a lot of holes in her heart. Her heart was leaking like a sieve. Her need was great and the idea of living water had great appeal to her. Later in John, chapter 7 Jesus says,

**37** . . . "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

You see, Jesus not only offers to forgive us our sins and to give us eternal life if we believe in Him, but He offers us an abundant life. He offers to fill our hearts with grace, love, and joy. Jesus is not only the door to our salvation, but he is also the means of our transformation. This is a daily, almost moment-by-moment promise, because our need is ever present. We are constantly coming up against our own sin and brokenness and so we need the life that Jesus offers to us every single day.

With what are you trying to satisfy the longings of your heart? If our hearts are empty, we so often look to other people to fill our hearts, but eventually we will be disappointed. For example, if we are looking to our spouses to be the primary source of life for our hearts, we are soon going to be disappointed because they cannot fill up our hearts. Over time, we are going to become bitter and resentful toward them. We will have nothing in our hearts to give to them and eventually, we will start looking for love in all the wrong places.

I find for myself, when my heart starts to get empty, I become self-absorbed. I become so focused on how others are not meeting my needs that I have very little capacity to love others. Can you relate to that? In our sin nature, we look to others for life, but fulfillment is only possible when we go to where the living waters of grace flow. Jesus offers us springs of living water that will not only satisfy us, but will overflow into the lives of others. When our hearts are filled with Jesus, we are freed to look outward, to love others, to invest in them and give them grace instead of trying to control and manipulate them for our own purposes.

Most of us carry around a lot of expectations in life. There are a lot of responsibilities and demands put upon us. We carry these like heavy weights through the mud, just trying to survive the day-to-day. We can feel ill equipped to give life to those we love the most, but the truth is that our marriages need us to have our hearts filled with Jesus so that we can fully engage in our marriage relationships. Our kids need us to have our hearts filled with Jesus so that we love them out of grace and truth instead of frustration and yelling. I was listening to my wife teach in one of the Sunday Communities earlier this month and she referred to Matthew 11 out of *The Message*. Jesus says,

**28** "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. **29** Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. **30** Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Doesn't this sound like an invitation you want to say yes to? We are so busy that we forget to let Jesus do the heavy lifting in our lives. We forget to come to Jesus and ask Him to fill our hearts each day with His grace and love.

I used to be a person who was zealously disciplined to spend at least an hour a day reading the Bible and praying. When we had Luke, I seemed to lose the capacity to find that time each day. Not only did we have a little one, but I got stretched a little bit thin at work. It wasn't too long before my heart was running on reserves. I noticed, or maybe other people pointed it out, that I had become more irritable, proud, and self-focused. The overflow of my heart was not grace but complaints. It doesn't seem to matter that I am in three small groups and teach several Bible classes each week. If I don't spend a little time with Jesus each day, grace leaks out of my heart and I have limited capacity to love others. I tend to have a personality that says, "If you don't do it the right way, don't do it at all." Like, if I can't exercise for two hours a day, there's no point in exercising at all, or, if I can't fish in Canada where the big fish are, there is no point in going fishing. And I was applying that to my spiritual disciplines as well.

But once I started to feed my soul again, I found that a little bit went a long way. Like Jesus feeding the 5,000 with only a few loaves of bread, He can feed my heart in ten minutes a day. I know this isn't the ideal way of doing spiritual disciplines. I know most of you are more like Martin Luther who said, "I'm so busy today that I am going to get up early and pray an extra two hours," but I want to be very practical in the next few minutes and give you some suggestions on how to fill your hearts with Jesus. These are for those of us who have toddlers or who are busy, or have not spent time alone with Jesus and want to begin to have our hearts filled. Spiritual disciplines in themselves do not give us life, they only give us life when we use them to connect to Jesus, the source of living water.

I noticed when I preached at Thanksgiving that several people were taking pictures of the screens of ideas they did not want to forget, so please feel free to take notes or use your phones to take pictures of the screens if you want to remember some of the things I'm sharing today. Here are four ways I've found helpful to let Jesus fill my heart with grace and truth. I encourage you to try all of them and stick with the ones you find the most nourishing to your soul.

**The first way we can fill our hearts with Jesus is through worship.** Certainly we could do a whole preaching series on the importance of worship and reasons why we should come together to worship. But one of the primary reasons to come together to worship is to be reminded how much we need a Savior and even more, to be reminded how great a Savior we have in Jesus.

I remember when I first started attending CPC in 2001 after my divorce. I had resigned from my position at a church where divorce was seen as the unpardonable sin. Needless to say, there were a lot of holes in my heart and I could relate to the woman at the well. In those days, our CPC mission statement was *inviting people into a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ* and Jesus had a lot transforming work to do in my heart. I was in desperate need of His living water. Jesus used worship here as a powerful instrument in healing my heart. Heather Hood [Minister of Worship and Music] always does such a great job in pointing us to Jesus, reminding us of our need for Jesus through confession and pointing us to His provision throughout the service. So often I would sit in the back row in the balcony, I think they should put a plaque on

my seat up there, with tears streaming down my face while God spoke to me through hymns like *Amazing Grace*.

Corporate worship was established by God to remind us of His faithfulness and of what He's done for us, and it's a foretaste of heaven where we will all be together someday, finally totally free of our sin and burdens, able to fully worship Christ and take in all that He's accomplished on our behalf. Jack Miller, in his devotional *Saving Grace*, talks about the importance of praise and worship in our lives. He says,

If you know you're forgiven, you can acknowledge that even the most negative thing in your life is under Jesus' blood. You never have to walk in darkness. Do you believe that? That's where faith responds in praise. The nature of praise is to teach us to look away from ourselves. What is repentance? Repentance is returning to God as the center. The detached comes back to where it was designed to be. Repentance is simply a way of finding God again, of claiming your Father, of claiming your forgiveness. And what is praise? If repentance is coming to God as the center, praise is lifting up God as the center. Isn't Jesus worth praising? Isn't he worth making the center of your life? He can take fear out of your life and fill you with glory. Doesn't that make you want to praise Jesus, to live for His glory? If you're forgiven much, you'll love much. If you're forgiven little, you'll love little. If you're forgiven little, you'll praise little.

Worship is a powerful way to realign our hearts and lives to the way they are intended to be. My wife's friend Molly Ruff says, "When we give God our highest praise, He gives us His deepest peace." When we start to realize the power of worship on the well-being of our hearts, we see that worship is not just something we should do on Sunday, but something we should do for our souls throughout the week.

After Luke was born, I decided I needed to redeem the time I spend in the car and put it to good use. I find that singing along with worship music or listening to a sermon that reminds me of what Jesus has done for me equips my heart for the day. Those of you who have smartphones have the means to connect to some great preachers out there who you can listen to in the car, who will renew your soul and feed you the grace you need for today. Or, you can listen to them at home on your computers. I've put up on the screen some preachers I listen to regularly. [Slide shown.] I encourage you to check them out. There are many good preachers you could choose from; these are just some of the ones I appreciate.

Timothy Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church  
Tullian Tchividjian, Coral Ridge Presbyterian  
Steve Shelby, West End Presbyterian Church  
J.D. Greear, [jdgrear.com/Deeper into the Gospel](http://jdgrear.com/Deeper into the Gospel)  
Liberate.org

The second key to receiving the living water Jesus has for us is to **read our Bibles every day**. In the preschooler's room, Martha North [Associate Director of Early Childhood] teaches the little kids a song that says, "Read your Bible. Pray every day. And you'll grow, grow, grow." If it is true for a three year old, it is certainly true for us. I find that I remember to do my daily Bible reading if I make it part of my breakfast routine. While it is probably better to read the Bible out of a Bible with paper pages, especially if it has the study notes, I use the Bible on my smartphone. I use

the app put out by LifeChurch. It is the most common Bible app out there, so if you just search for Holy Bible, it will pop up at the top of your search.

There are three reasons why I use the app. One is that I can make the font big enough so that I can actually read it. Another is that I have it with me everywhere I go and one of the neat features of the Bible app is that it has daily reading plans that will take you through the Bible. I'm currently doing a plan that takes me through the New Testament in a year by reading a chapter a day. I think that's a good plan for anyone who is starting out because it is both manageable and life giving. When we read the Bible, it is important to have the right perspective. Having the right perspective when we are reading the Bible will make all the difference in its effectiveness in our hearts. We should read it through the lens that the Bible is God's love letter to us. The Bible is more about what God has done for us than it is about what we should be doing.

I read a blog by Paul Tripp that talks about three things we should remember when we read the Bible to give us the right perspective. The first one, Paul says, is we need to *remember God's Grace*. You'll never find joy in Bible study until you understand that reading God's Word is not first a call to duty, but an invitation to receive a wonderful gift. Your Bible is a gift of God's grace that's able to do what no other gift can do—change your heart and your life.

The second thing Paul says is that we need to *remember Jesus*. Reading God's Word is much more than reading dusty, abstract theology, becoming familiar with ancient religious stories or getting principles for daily living. You'll never have joy in your Bible study unless you understand that it's God's invitation to you to commune with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Open your Bible and what do you encounter? Not a thing, but a person, and His name is Jesus. Reading and meditating on your Bible is God's means of welcoming you into daily fellowship with your brother, friend, Savior and King—Jesus.

The third thing Paul says we need to do is *remember to remember*. He says, "I'm so prone to forget God, forget His grace, forget my identity as His child and that He supplies all I need, forget His unstoppable sovereign plan, and forget His eternal kingdom. When I forget God, I tend to put myself in His position and make my life all about me: my will, my feelings, my plans, my wants, and my needs." I can relate to that. Can you?

Putting myself in God's position always leads to spiritual dissatisfaction because the world was not created to do my bidding. I need to be reminded every day of God's awesome glory, His gracious presence in my life, and my special identity as His child. His Word was given so that day after day, I would remember. So, tomorrow when you don't feel like opening your Bible, remember God's grace, remember your friend and brother, Jesus, and remember how quickly we forget. Pick up God's Word, not with the burden of guilt or as a call to duty, but because it's a gift given to you by a God of amazingly tender mercy and grace.

The third spiritual discipline that I find is life giving for me is **reading a devotional that points me to Jesus**, that reminds me who I am in Christ and that Christ is my provision for today. One of the beauties of devotionals is that they take only two minutes to read, but they are packed with powerful concepts that impact our hearts for the whole day.

My favorite devotional is the one I mentioned, *Saving Grace* by Jack Miller. Jack was the founder of the missions organization that my wife Anna served with in Ireland and Spain. Jack

mentored some kid named Tim Keller, so if you know Tim Keller, you can see what kind of impact this man has had on people. His devotional is available in our bookstore. If you read one book this year, let it be the Bible, but if you read two books this year, let the second one be this devotional. Can you tell how much I love this book?

The final spiritual discipline that has been powerful in my life these last few years has been to **preach the Gospel to myself on a daily basis**. The reality is that grace leaked out of my heart. We need to continually be reminded of God's love and grace. At the Thanksgiving service, I talked at length about how our hearts can become cold to God's grace because we push it out and fill our hearts with lesser things.

From the beginning, God had a plan to redeem His beloved by sending His Son to rescue us. Jesus lived a life of obedience that we could never live, He died the death we deserved, paying off the debt of our sins, and He gave us His righteousness so that we can stand before the Judge just as if we had always obeyed. We call all this simply the Gospel, God's unmerited favor offered freely to us. I find that when I remind myself daily that the Gospel is my identity and my security, it changes my perspective on my whole day. One of the ways that I preach the Gospel to myself daily is to read out loud passages of Scripture that speak to me the reality of what Jesus has done for me and who I am in Christ.

I have three passages that I read almost every day. I keep a copy of them on my phone and a copy at my desk at work. For a lot of people, it works well to tape them to your bathroom mirror and read them in the morning as you are getting ready for the day. I've put on the screen some suggested passages to choose from. [Slide shown.] Just pick two or three that speak to your heart.

**3** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4** For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace **8** that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, **9** he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10** to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment--to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ [Ephesians 1:3-10].

**11b** Your sinful nature was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, **12** having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. **13** When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14** having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. **15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross [Colossians 2:11b-15].

**4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ

Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus [Ephesians 2:4-7].

**1** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus . . . .  
[Romans 8:1]

**31** What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? **33** Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. **34** Who then can condemn? No one. Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **36** As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." **37** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord [Romans 8:31-39].

**1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. **6** You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us [Romans 5:1-8].

**16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him [John 3:16-17].

**15** Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. **16** But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life [1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1:15-16].

Come each morning to Jesus to receive living water. Drink up His grace and His love. His mercies are new every morning. We just need to show up and receive His gift and as our hearts fill up with His grace, that grace will overflow to others in our lives. Let's go back to our story of the woman at the well and see how she responds to receiving this living water.

**28** Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, **29** "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"

**39** Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him [Jesus] because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. **41** And because of his words many more became believers. **42** They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

She runs into town to share this good news and can you believe that she goes to share it with the very people who treat her as an outcast? She calls them to come and see. Come and see Jesus. Why is her message so effective? Because she comes to them in her brokenness. When she says, "He told me everything I ever did," she is really confessing her own sin. She calls them to come and see the one who knows all her sin and yet loves her, accepts her, and came to save her from that very sin. Jesus is her Savior!

I have never led anyone to Christ through my so-called self-righteousness or successes. The most powerful way of connecting people to Jesus has always been through my sin and suffering. Philip Yancey says, "Imperfection is the only prerequisite for grace. Light only gets through the cracks." The light of Jesus shines through me in my broken places when my life shows His grace at work. One of my life verses is from 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1.

**15** . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. **16** But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

When the grace of Jesus captivates our hearts, it drives us to be messengers of His grace. His love compels us to be ambassadors of this good news. This joy that comes from continually experiencing His grace, the security of being one of God's beloved children and resting in the righteousness of Christ, overflows out of our hearts. This empowers us to engage in our broken world with the great expectation that the same Jesus who is transforming our hearts will redeem the broken hearts of those we relate to throughout the week, whether they be strangers on the street in one-time encounters or the people who live under our roofs.

As you preach the Gospel to yourself and your heart begins to be filled, you will begin to preach the Gospel to others. Your life will become the message of the Gospel because Jesus is in you, Jesus is transforming you, and Jesus is flowing out of you. I know this to be true because it is the story of my life. Each Sunday we pray, *give us this day our daily bread*. In John, chapter 6, Jesus says,

**35** . . . "I am the bread of life.

He says, "I am your daily bread."

Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

So let us come to Jesus every morning to receive His grace, love, and power. Let's pray together.

Jesus, we are so thankful that You came to earth to rescue us, that You love us so much You come after us and pursue us with Your love and Your grace. We confess that so often we fill our hearts with empty things or even toxic things and yet in Your patience, You stand there with living water just waiting for us to ask for it. We pray that Your Spirit would call us each morning to spend time with You to receive this gift You have for us. We pray that You would equip us for each day so that we would be better able to love those who are close to us and those who we encounter throughout the week. We pray this in Thy Name. Amen.

*The nature of oral presentations makes them less precise than written materials; any lack of attribution is unintentional, and we wish to credit all those who have contributed to this sermon. Soli Deo Gloria.*